

AP Lit Summer Work:
The Kite Runner and How to Read Literature Like a Professor

Dear Scholars,

I can't tell you how excited I am to teach you this fall! AP Lit is a dream class for me, and your reputation as hardworking, perceptive students precedes you and enhances my enthusiasm. This summer, I hope that you *take a break* and *relax* with your family and friends... and absolutely make time to read for *pleasure*. However, I also maintain *very high* expectations for you, and therefore I want to challenge you with the assignment below. Here are your tasks:

1. First read *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster. This up-front, at times sassy and quip-quilted guide holds invaluable insights for how to do what its title claims: read texts like a professor. Read with intent, highlighting and annotating important relevant information. **Please be ready to brainstorm and share examples of the various "Fosterisms" that you can identify both in the Hosseini novel and in your other literary experiences. This text will be a touchstone for us all year.**

2. Next you will read *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini. This powerful novel continues to rivet readers and is a modern-day classic about the horrors and hidden beauty of Afghanistan. While you read the novel, please **annotate** it thoroughly: this involves "interacting" with the text via marginal notes, character lists on the inside covers, highlighting and underlining terms and quotes, using color-coded post-its, etc. Specifically, I would like you to highlight and label all "Fosterisms" you find in **green highlighter (we'll see who can come up with the most—extra credit to the winner!)**. I will collect and check your books **for a grade** the first day of school, and you can expect an in-class timed write about the novel within the first couple weeks. I hope you appreciate this phenomenal *bildungsroman* that conveys a heart-wrenching story with deft techniques. It haunted me.

3. Once finished reading *The Kite Runner*, you will respond to **one** of three past AP Open Prompts, which are on the second page of this handout. The Open Prompt, or Question 3, is designed to test a student's ability to discuss a "work as a whole" [identify transcendent themes]. Your response to this prompt will be an important measurement of your strengths and areas for growth in literary analysis.

Your response to the AP Prompt shall:

- a) be typed
- b) be double-spaced
- c) be in Times New Roman, 12 pt. font
- d) use specific references to the text(s)
- e) include a Works Cited page
- f) be in MLA format [**including in-text quotation citations**]
- g) be a minimum of 3 *full* pages, not to exceed 5 pages

This paper and your annotated Hosseini novel are due at the first class meeting of the new school year. Please see the new AP Lit Exam Rubric for how this paper will be graded.

Choose ONE of the following for your paper:

1) "And, after all, our surroundings influence our lives and characters as much as fate, destiny or any supernatural agency."—Pauline Hopkins, *Contending Forces*

Choose a novel or play [use *The Kite Runner*] in which cultural, physical, or geographical surroundings shape psychological or moral traits in a character. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how surroundings affect this character and illuminate the meaning of the work as a whole.

2) Palestinian American literary theorist and cultural critic Edward Said has written that, "Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted." Yet Said has also said that exile can become "a potent, even enriching" experience.

Select a novel, play, or epic [use *The Kite Runner*] in which a character experiences such a rift and becomes cut off from "home," whether that home is the character's birthplace, family, homeland, or other special place. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the character's experience with exile is both alienating and enriching, and how this experience illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole.

3) In many works of literature, past events can affect, positively or negatively, the present actions, attitudes, or values of a character. Choose a novel or play [use *The Kite Runner*] in which a character must contend with some aspect of the past, either personal or societal. Then write an essay in which you show how the character's relationship to the past contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.

Best of luck to you. Please don't hesitate to email me with any questions:
cfrye@sjmhs.org. Happy reading and have a sensational summer!

Miss Frye